

# Wilson Fights Even Limited War Inquiry

Opposes the Chamberlain Resolution as Amended by Committee

## Senate May Decide The Issue To-day

Appointment of Hughes Means President Wants to Do All Investigating

By C. W. Gilbert

WASHINGTON, May 16.—The fate of further investigations by the Senate into the effectiveness of war preparations is likely to be decided to-morrow. The President is opposed to the Chamberlain resolution, even as amended by the Committee on Audit and Control. He is opposed to any resolution at all extending the investigating powers of the Military Affairs Committee. Senator Thompson, who saw Mr. Wilson this morning, said:

"The President authorized me to say that he was just as much opposed to the amended resolution as he was to the original resolution."

It is understood that Mr. Wilson holds no resolution is necessary, as the Military Affairs Committee has now all the powers it requires to conduct any investigation needed. He thinks, it is said, that the passage of the amended resolution or any resolution of a similar nature would be equivalent to a declaration of war by the President, and that the committee to start inquiries into various subjects and that continuous inquiries by Congress would interfere with the progress of war preparations.

It will be recalled in this connection that the President, in his letter to Senator Chamberlain at the time the Senator offered him by his speech in New York, said that the investigators had delayed the work of making ready for war, using up the valuable time of War Department executives by calling them to the witness stand.

### Real Attitude of the President

The exact language he used was this:

"Investigations which drew indisputable officials constantly away from their work and officers from their commands, and contributed a great deal to such delay and confusion as had inevitably arisen."

That letter represents the real attitude of the President. He resents investigations, and he is determined that investigations are not to be extended in the way the Chamberlain resolution is amended, provides that they shall be. If that resolution should pass, Congress will not wait for a scandal to develop before making an inquiry, but will inform itself constantly how the billions it appropriates for war are being spent.

Mr. Wilson means that Congress shall not do this. The amendment of the resolution has compelled him to shift his ground and disclose more nearly what his real attitude is. It is not unlikely that a further letter from him to-day will make plain that constant oversight of expenditures for supplies will be intolerable to him, and will declare it to be an interference with the conduct of the war and a reflection of want of confidence in his administration.

The meaning of the Hughes appointment, as of the earlier appointment of the Marshall committee, is that the President intends to take the function of investigating away from Congress. He wants everything, even the inquiry into the acts of his subordinates, in his own hands, and by opposing even the amended Chamberlain resolution he is boldly challenging the right of Congress to inform itself about the expenditure of public money.

### Investigation Only Independent Activity

Investigation is the one real function that Congress has been exercising. For the rest it has been merely doing what the President tells it to do—passing the laws he asks for and appropriating the money he demands. Investigation has been its one vital independent activity. And the President means to take that away and exercise it himself.

The Chamberlain resolution fails of passing for the reason that the investigations will run on for a little while, but will stop soon for lack of power during recess or for lack of money. If the Senate refuses to appropriate \$100,000 for carrying them on it very soon will decline to furnish money on the basis on which it has furnished money in the past.

If the resolution is beaten there can be no mistake about the meaning of its defeat. It will be a vote against investigation, in obedience to the President's wishes, and inevitably investigations will stop unless some scandal arises which cries out for more independent inquiry than one conducted by the executive department itself.

Senator McKellar made his report for the majority of the Audit Committee to-day, in favor of the amended resolution. Senator Thompson will make his minority report against any resolution to-morrow. The members of the Military Affairs Sub-Committee who have been visiting gun plants will be back in their seats to-morrow, and means will be had. The issue is close. But the general expectation is that the President will win and investigations by the Senate will soon stop.

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# Plead 'Patriotism' As Defence For Prager Lynching

Accused Men Had no Right to Kill on Suspicion, Judge Declares

(Special Dispatch to The Tribune)

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill., May 16.—An unwritten law justifying "patriotic murder" as a measure of home protection will be invoked by the eleven defendants on trial for lynching Robert Prager, an enemy alien, at Collinsville, on April 5. This was revealed to-day by J. M. Bundy, attorney for the defence, during an examination that exhausted a panel of 256 prospective jurors, with none accepted.

In suggesting the course the defence will take Mr. Bundy pointed to the Illinois statute that defines murder as "the unlawful killing of a human being within the peace of the people and with malice aforethought, expressed or implied."

According to the defence, Prager was a German spy, and as such was not within the "peace of the people." "We will show that his status was that of a burglar, who is planning to break into a house at night, and whom the owners kill in defence," said Mr. Bundy.

Rules on Status of Alien.

Questions addressed to prospective jurors as to whether they believed an enemy alien was within the peace of the people.

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There is a general belief that Ludendorff has timed his blow for the beginning of next week, when the moon will be in the same phase as it was on March 21. Every ounce of German strength will be put into the next thrust. On land, on sea and in the air the enemy will strive desperately to crush the Allied defenses.

## Enemy's Scheme of Conquest Shown in Captured Document

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WITH THE FRENCH ARMY IN FRANCE, May 15.—Germany's conditions of peace are clearly stated in a document found in a German trench that was recently recaptured by Entente Allied troops. A résumé of the principal conditions, as given in an official translation, reads:

"After the enormous sacrifices we have made of our blood and property we exact as a necessary minimum to the preservation and development of Germany the following:

"Belgium, especially the Flanders coast with Antwerp, is to remain under German military, economic and political dependence.

"Liberty of the seas shall be properly established for all nations, the Central Powers being allowed a commercial fleet totalling 17,500,000 tons, while that of the Allies should amount to 10,900,000 tons.

"Our colonies shall be returned with augmentation.

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Ten of these divisions, it is stated, are in the region between Neuport and Ypres; forty divisions are between Ypres and La Bassée Canal and 100 divisions from La Bassée Canal to the Oise.

On this basis, it is estimated, says the newspaper, that the German strength from Ypres to the Oise is some six men to the yard, except on the northern part of the front, above Ypres, where the estimate is a third of that number.

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